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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

SUB-COMMISSION ON PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND
PROTECTION OF MINORITIES

Forty-fourth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 7th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Friday, 7 August 1992, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. ALFONSO MARTINEZ

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF SLAVERY (agenda item 16) (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1992/34, E/CN.4/Sub.2/1992/35 and Add.1; E/CN.4/1992/45, E/CN.4/1992/55 and Add.1)

1. The CHAIRMAN announced that Mr. Al-Khasawneh, Chairman-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, had not been able to attend the first week of the current session. He therefore invited Mrs. Ksentini to introduce the report of the Working Group on its seventeenth session (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1992/34).

2. Mrs. KSENTINI said that although the Working Group had met for a total of eight working days at its seventeenth session - three more than the five days allocated in previous years - it had nevertheless barely managed to complete its agenda in the time available. It was thus to be hoped that the size of the Working Group's agenda would be borne in mind when future meetings were scheduled.

3. Some 20 non-governmental organizations had attended the meetings. Nevertheless, it was fair to say that the level of governmental, inter-governmental and non-governmental participation still left a good deal to be desired.

4. The Working Group had conducted an overall evaluation of its activities over the previous three years, with particular reference to the three programmes of action discussed in Chapter IV of the report, and had reformulated the draft programme of action for the elimination of the exploitation of child labour. A draft decision proposing that the Sub-Commission should transmit the revised draft programme of action to the Commission on Human Rights was contained in Annex I to the report. It was to be hoped that that draft decision would be adopted at the present session.

5. The Working Group had also reviewed information received on the status and the implementation of conventions on slavery and slavery-like practices. Mr. Maxim would present to the Sub-Commission the analysis he had submitted to the Working Group of information received from States in that regard.

6. The report also reviewed developments in other fields of contemporary forms of slavery (Chapter V), discussed the follow-up of recommendations adopted at previous sessions (Chapter VI), and set forth the recommendations adopted at its seventeenth session. A review of the information provided to the Working Group and of the problems brought to its attention showed that, despite the progress made in the protection of human rights and the preservation of human dignity, all over the world various forms of slavery still existed. Emphasis had been placed on the large number of disappearances, particularly of children, problems relating to prostitution, drug trafficking and money laundering, incest, and institutionalized sexual violence. Emphasis had also been placed on the need for reparation and compensation, particularly moral compensation.

7. The Working Group stressed the importance of collaboration by Special Rapporteurs with the Working Group in areas of common interest. If financial considerations did not allow for visits by Special Rapporteurs to Geneva for that specific purpose, periods of consultation of Special Rapporteurs at the Centre for Human Rights should be scheduled to coincide with the future sessions of the Working Group.

8. She also drew specific attention to the Working Group's recommendations regarding the removal of organs from children, eradication of debt bondage, slavery-like practices of apartheid, child soldiers, disappearances linked to contemporary forms of slavery, and especially with regard to prevention of traffic in persons and exploitation of the prostitution of others, in which particular emphasis was placed on the phenomenon of sex tourism. The Working Group had also noted with satisfaction General Assembly resolution 46/122 establishing a United Nations Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, and called for the immediate implementation of that resolution. The Chairman of the Sub-Commission should consult with the Secretary-General at an early date with a view to appointing the members of the Fund's Board of Trustees.

9. The Working Group had also attempted to rationalize its agenda, and had accordingly drawn up a new provisional agenda, details of which were to be found in Annex II to the report. Sub-items 5 (f), (g) and (h) were new agenda items.

10. Mr. MAXIM presented a summary of the report he had submitted to the Working Group on the status and implementation of the slavery conventions, full details of which were contained in paragraphs 8 to 14 of document E/CN.4/Sub.2/1992/34. The Working Group had studied the 1926 Slavery Convention, the 1956 Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, and the 1949 Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, as well as all other relevant international instruments. He drew attention to the disappointingly small number of States parties which had submitted reports over the previous five years in response to the request for submission of information concerning the status and implementation of the slavery conventions. In addition to the countries listed in paragraph 11 of the report, Sweden, Romania, the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic and Norway had also submitted information.

11. The United Nations bodies which had dealt with the issue of the abolition of slavery claimed that slavery could not be eliminated through mere programmes. Such an extremely complex phenomenon needed action both at the national and international levels. Among the methods and measures advocated for that purpose, pride of place should be assigned to better implementation of the existing international instruments. Specialized agencies and United Nations bodies were urged to submit regular reports to the Working Group on their activities in that field.

12. It had also been proposed that the 1926 and 1956 Conventions should be revised so as to cover contemporary forms of slavery. In view of the time needed for such a procedure, an alternative would be to adopt an optional

protocol. If a procedure for regular submission of reports were accepted by States, a special body should be created to examine the communications, since the mandate of the Working Group did not include such an issue. In addition, action should be taken to persuade States which had not yet ratified the conventions on slavery to do so. One of the Special Rapporteurs, Mr. Awad had suggested creating an expert committee on slavery. Members of the Working Group had agreed that all those suggestions might be useful temporary measures. Ultimately, however, everything depended on States' will to take follow-up action.

13. As far as the reinforcement of the role and functions of the Working Group was concerned, the establishment of a procedure such as the one adopted in Council resolution 1505 (XLVIII) should prove effective. The Working Group should also recommend to the Sub-Commission that it appoint special rapporteurs on urgent matters and send investigating missions to those countries where there were gross violations of human rights in the area of contemporary forms of slavery.

14. The fact that the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) had cooperated with the Working Group for the first time at its previous session was a most positive development. Further cooperation by INTERPOL would doubtless prove of great value in the future.

15. Mr. EIDE said that the report showed that the Working Group had become one of the Sub-Commission's most important bodies. He hoped that it would be given the opportunity to meet for the same extended period the following year, and that similar or even better working facilities would be extended to it. The Secretariat had provided excellent support; nevertheless, it was to be hoped that an official would shortly be attached to the Working Group on a permanent basis. Meanwhile, Governments and intergovernmental organizations should devote special attention to the report, and to addressing the problems set forth in it.

16. One of the Working Group's many achievements was the adoption by the Commission on Human Rights of its Programme of Action on the Prevention of the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. The fact that the Working Group would now be acting as a monitoring body to review implementation of that programme of action was to be welcomed, as was the decision to examine the phenomenon of the induction of child soldiers into militant opposition groups, a horrendous practice not only on account of the physical risks to which such children were exposed, but also because it rendered them subsequently incapable of contemplating peaceful solutions to problems. He also hoped that the reformulated draft programme of action for the elimination of the exploitation of child labour would be transmitted to the Commission on Human Rights unamended. Lastly, he endorsed the request that a special rapporteur should be appointed to update the very important study by Mr. Bouhdiba contained in document E/CN.4/Sub.2/479/Rev.1.

17. Ms. CHAVEZ said that the sexual exploitation of children was a tragic issue which knew no boundaries and was to be found in every country in the world, including her own. It was ironic that the advent of the computer age had assisted the groups which engaged in the traffic as modern means of communication enabled them to maintain instantaneous contact with each other worldwide.

18. She urged the Sub-Commission to continue to monitor the situation closely.

19. Mr. GUISSE said that tourism was a source of hard currency in many countries and accordingly was strongly encouraged by Governments as a means of promoting development. The result was a sort of guilty conspiracy between Government and tourist which represented a danger to children by promoting prostitution and sexual exploitation. Children also became an instrument for the propagation of diseases from abroad, particularly in the developing countries. Development must therefore be accompanied by measures to protect the young.

20. Tourism also generated begging by children and tourists, by giving, encouraged the habit. On the other hand, when no coins were available, children would turn to crime, including drug trafficking. Through tourism, children were exposed to all kinds of risks with the complicity of Governments.

21. Nobody should turn a blind eye to the use of children in military activities in which they were used as cannon fodder. He considered that the Working Group should pursue its work on a broader front with a view to ensuring greater protection for children, particularly in connection with their involvement in armed conflicts.

22. Ms. OZDEN (Centre Europe - Tiers Monde), speaking also on behalf of the World Federation of Methodist Women Soroptomist International, said that child prostitution was a relatively recent phenomenon which had developed dramatically in countries of the third world, particularly Brazil, Thailand, India, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and the Dominican Republic and was currently spreading to African countries such as Kenya and Côte d'Ivoire. It was also more widespread in developed countries than was generally admitted.

23. In the third world, sexual exploitation reflected the economic domination of the South by the countries of the North. Poverty in the countries of the third world had driven the population to accept the prostitution of the young who were being increasingly stricken by disease, as the dramatic rise in AIDS attested.

24. According to official statistics, there were 10,000 child prostitutes in Sri Lanka and 800,000 in Thailand. In Bangladesh, 50 per cent of the prostitutes were under 19 years of age. Every year 100,000 Nepalese were sent to India and forced to engage in prostitution. In Bombay, 20 per cent of the 100,000 prostitutes were minors. Reliable estimates spoke of 2 million child and adolescent prostitutes in Brazil and between 100,000 and 120,000 in the Philippines, including 20,000 in Manila.

25. Against that alarming background, her organization urged States to ratify the 1949 Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child. It also urged States to initiate campaigns, such as the Swiss campaign against child prostitution, to attack the economic and social causes of child prostitution.

26. An equitable international economic and monetary policy must also be developed and additional reserves found for economic cooperation. Debt cancellation on a worldwide scale must be pursued and an end must be put to ajustment programmes which adversely affected the interests of the population. Public opinion must also be alerted to the causes and the destructive results of the sexual exploitation of children and the public authorities should support the efforts of charitable organizations, churches, doctors, lawyers and the media in combating that evil.

27. Information on the sexual exploitation of children must become a compulsory feature in the training of social workers, teachers, doctors, lawyers, the police and all those working in tourism, both in the North and in the South. The highest priority must be given to the protection and to the rights of children. Any form of sexual exploitation of children must be punished as a crime, independently of the legislation of the country where the crime was committed. In that connection, she urged the Swiss Government to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

28. In conclusion she recalled that sex tourism was a further cause of child prostitution and reflected another aspect of the economic domination of the poor countries by the rich.

29. Ms. BRUCE (International Catholic Child Bureau) said that her comments would be directed particularly to the issue of children who were sold for purposes of prostitution and pornography.

30. Little international coordination existed apart from INTERPOL's announced commitment and the End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism (ECPAT) campaigns designed to stem the tide of sex tourism in Asian countries. The Working Group was a useful coordinating mechanism for those important issues and its system of thematic discussions over the previous three years had proved to be quite effective through its excellent programmes of action and as a reference point for NGO groups around the world working on those issues.

31. The Working Group should, however, go beyond the drafting of programmes of action and guidelines. The Programme of Action on the Prevention of the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography had already led to an unprecedented number of replies from Governments. The question was how to harness the concern of Governments by creating new ways to stop and punish the exploiters on the one hand and to assist the child victims on the other. The Sub-Commission must consider more proactive methods of work, such as those mentioned in the report, if change was to come about.

32. The United Nations Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery could represent one of those proactive methods in that it could provide funds for experts to come to the Working Group with knowledge which, for lack of funds, was as yet largely untapped. Non-governmental organizations would benefit from knowing when the Trust Fund would become operational and considered that the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children and the Trust Fund should be represented officially in the Working Group, which should also be encouraged to cooperate more closely with interested agencies such as ILO, UNICEF and UNESCO.

33. The Programme of Action on the Prevention of the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography should make it possible to develop precise strategies for combating all forms of child slavery, while policy guidelines and recommendations could be drawn up which could be used by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child in its monitoring of those articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which related to contemporary forms of slavery. Discussion of the types of information and educational campaigns under way, law enforcement measures, police training programmes, rehabilitation programmes and new legislation on related issues would make for further progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action and her organization urged the Centre for Human Rights to give careful consideration to the preparation of the debates on those issues. In that connection the NGO subgroup on the sexual exploitation of children was preparing a booklet to send to NGO affiliates worldwide encouraging them to begin dialogue with Governments on ways to implement the Programme of Action.

34. Mr. TOTSUKA (International Educational Development) referring to the situation of the approximately 200,000 Korean girls and women who had been abducted by the Japanese forces during the Second World War for use as "comfort women" said that he wished to express his organization's appreciation to the Working Group of its request to the Secretary-General to submit the information it had received on the situation of those women to the Special Rapporteur on the right to restitution, compensation and rehabilitation for victims of gross violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

35. Some 1.5 million Korean men had also been abducted to Japan during the Japanese occupation of Korea and had been used for forced labour. Those victims had received no redress.

36. The Government of Japan had claimed that, by virtue of the 1965 Agreement between Japan and the Republic of Korea, the latter had abandoned all claims, including those of individual Koreans and accordingly no individual Korean had any legal right to claim compensation from Japan. His organization did not agree with that argument; human rights and fundamental freedoms were inalienable and claims for restitution, compensation and rehabilitation were essential elements of the human rights of the victims of any violations of human rights. In addition, slavery was contrary to jus cogens, as the report

of the Working Group had made clear; it could not therefore be derogated from or evaded by Governments. Freedom from slavery was one of the oldest fundamental freedoms under customary international law. Any treaty which violated the rules of jus cogens was null and void. His organization therefore believed that, even if the claims of individual Koreans had been abandoned by the Government of the Republic of Korea, the individual rights of those individuals against Japan were still intact. That point had never been discussed formally by the Japanese Government.

37. The Japanese Government could not invoke the same defence against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as there had been no agreement between Japan and that country. Japan had reportedly implied that there was no violation of existing Japanese domestic law in their use of the so-called "comfort women" and of men for forced labour. The Japanese legal tradition had however always been that international law, including international customary law, was incorporated in the domestic legal system without any legislation being required and that international law overrode statutory laws. Furthermore, freedom from slavery was part of customary international law; it had taken an explicit form in the Forced Labour Convention of 1930 which had been ratified by Japan in 1932. In that Convention, the only exceptions to the ban on forced labour were compulsory military service and any work of service exacted in cases of emergency. In any case, the forced labour of women was prohibited by articles 1 and 11. According to an investigation conducted into the forced displacement of Koreans, many articles of the Convention had been violated by Japan in the cases of enslaved Korean men and women.

38. Other atrocities committed by Japan included the case of 200,000 prisoners of war and civilian internees who had been enslaved and harshly treated by the Japanese forces during the Second World War. It had also been reported that "comfort women" had been drafted not only from Korea but also from China, Taiwan and the Philippines and that at least 35 Dutch women detained in the camps by the Japanese occupation forces in Indonesia had been forced to engage in prostitution in 1944.

39. His organization urged Japan to change its current attitude of refusal to pay compensation to the victims of enslavement. There seemed however to be no prospect of swift and effective remedy for the individual victims of those gross violations of human rights and there was therefore no alternative to vigorous intervention by United Nations bodies. International Educational Development urged those bodies to take any necessary steps for the victims as they had done in the case of the victims in Europe of the Nazi regime in Germany. Lack of action for the victims in Asia could well be viewed as an example of double standards.

40. Mr. JOINET congratulated the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery on its excellent report (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1992/34). Some 30 observers of States and as many representatives of non-governmental organizations, including those of INTERPOL, had attended the session of the Working Group, thereby underscoring the importance of its efforts. He noted that in the past year there had been substantive new developments in the area, and that the provisional agenda for 1993 contained a number of important new themes.

41. Mr. YIMER said that he was impressed by the comprehensive nature of the report. All the problems touched upon were equally serious, and continued vigilance was therefore imperative. He wished to single out one new and particularly disturbing phenomenon, the removal of organs from children for commercial transplants. The Sub-Commission must combat that scourge with all means at its disposal because it was a new development that could still be curbed in the early stages. It was to be hoped that the 1993 report would contain more comprehensive information on that practice. While not wishing to minimize the importance of the other problems, he proposed the creation of a programme of action to combat the phenomenon.

42. Mr. BOUTKEVITCH said that the report was serious, all-encompassing and convincing from the legal point of view. But even the best legal standards did not necessarily help in practice. When dealing with such offences, problems would arise in connection with establishing the facts, defining the nature of the crime, the relationship between guilt and the prejudice sustained, etc. Any standards on slavery and slavery-like practices would remain without effect in the absence of national legislation; for that reason he urged that there should be a sub-item on the review of national legislation and was pleased that the agenda for the eighteenth session had made such provision (sub-item 3 (c)). Such a review would make it clear which Governments were prepared to work to eliminate that scourge and which were not.

43. Mr. MAXIM said that the report had shown just how horrible certain contemporary forms of slavery were. He welcomed the decision to allow non-governmental organizations to speak on the subject, because they would have valuable information to offer.

44. In Romania, he had spoken on many occasions to senior officials in the Government on the question of the sale of children, a phenomenon under the old regime. There was a desire in Romania to find out whether those children had truly been adopted or misused for other purposes. Current Romanian legislation and assistance from the international community had made it possible to do away with the practice, but in the meantime, another phenomenon had arisen, the wave of procurers who came from Western countries to recruit young Romanian girls for prostitution. He had raised the issue repeatedly in speeches that he had delivered to the Romanian police, magistrates and lawyers and had also addressed it in interviews in the press, because alerting public opinion was the only way to put an end to that evil. Current legislation was adequate, but enforcement by the police and the courts was too lax. Cooperation among neighbouring States was also essential.

45. Mrs. KADJAR-HAMOUDA (International Federation Terre des Hommes) drew attention to child prostitution in Brazil, a particularly visible effect of the economic crisis, unemployment, structural violence and the failure of the educational system. Millions of Brazilian children lived on the streets and were thus exposed to prostitution; sometimes the victims were only nine years old. Many young girls, subjected to sexual abuse by members of their own family, often preferred to live on the streets to escape such violence. In other cases, the family itself encouraged prostitution: girls, working as

street vendors, were expected to bring home a certain amount of money, failing which they were beaten; thus, they prostituted themselves when they were unable to earn enough money. Owing to the lack of information and maturity, young prostitutes frequently had recourse to dangerous abortions or became very young mothers without any material or moral resources for bringing up their child, and their offspring was thus virtually condemned to a life of crime on the street.

46. In the poorest regions of Brazil, particularly in the north, trafficking in young girls for prostitution had been growing. The victims lived in conditions bordering on slavery, with the active complicity of some of the local police. When the girls sought to escape, they were beaten and even murdered. The debts that they contracted were used to force them to prostitute themselves.

47. In the gold-prospecting region of the Amazon, most murders of young prostitutes went unpunished, and the bodies of the victims were buried in unmarked graves. No investigations were ever opened, and those responsible were never brought to justice.

48. In order to combat those terrible violations, at the beginning of 1992 a media campaign had been launched in Brazil against violence, slavery, trafficking in children and prostitution, apparently with positive results.

49. At its most recent session, the Commission on Human Rights had adopted an excellent programme to combat child prostitution. The International Federation Terre des Hommes hoped that all the Governments concerned would draw broadly upon that programme so as to halt that terrible abuse.

50. Ms. EDMONDS (World Association for the School as an Instrument for Peace) congratulated the Sub-Commission and its Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery on producing the Programme of Action on the Prevention of the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and the draft programme of action for the elimination of the exploitation of child labour.

51. One of the founding principles of the World Association for the School as an Instrument of Peace (EIP) was that education was prevention: when a community was educated about the causes and manifestations of a problem, it was better able to attack the problem and prevent its recurrence. Examples of street children in countries around the world who had been educated about their rights and who had, with non-governmental organizations and the local community, taken action to ameliorate their conditions, offered confirmation that education could bring about concrete changes in human lives. EIP particularly wished to stress the importance of the information and education sections of the Programme of Action on the Prevention of the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. The section on education reminded States of their obligations under international human rights instruments and placed an important emphasis on educating not only the child, but also parents and professionals and all who acted on behalf of the child.

52. EIP recommended the section on education as a point of departure for other programmes of action, such as the draft programme of action for the elimination of the exploitation of child labour. EIP hoped that the Sub-Commission would emphasize, in such programmes of action, that Governments should assume their obligations to provide free primary education to all children, particularly those who must work to support their families, thereby fully honouring their obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. UNESCO, ILO and other intergovernmental organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations, had created material especially designed for teaching literacy and human rights to working children and their parents. If it was so amended, the draft programme of action for the elimination of the exploitation of child labour would offer the Sub-Commission an opportunity to stress the importance of human rights education for the child and for the community as a means of preventing such exploitation.

53. Mr. CHAI Wei (International Fellowship of Reconciliation) said that as a Chinese student who had been present near Tiananmen Square on the evening of 4 June 1989, he thought it appropriate that he should speak about the legal conditions of those who remained in detention in China.

54. He drew attention to paragraphs 92 to 94 of the report of the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1992/34), which recorded an exchange concerning the number of prisoners in labour reform camps in China. A representative of a non-governmental organization had cited a study by a researcher at Stanford University and estimated that there were between 12 and 16 million inmates in such camps at the current time. The observer for the People's Republic of China had replied that there were only 1.1 million inmates in prison and reform institutions in that country. Thus, there was a wide discrepancy and it was important to clarify how it had arisen. The above-mentioned research study had been published as a book in May 1992 under the title Lao Gai - The Chinese Gulag, published by Westview Press. Its author, Mr. Harry Wu, would be attending the Sub-Commission in the following week and would be glad to answer questions. In his book, Mr. Wu in fact estimated the total number of inmates in labour reform camps in China to be between 15 and 21 million. He identified three separate categories: firstly, convicted labour reform criminals who had been sentenced by the courts (4 to 6 million); secondly, persons sent to labour camps under administrative processes, without reference to legal organs, for re-education through labour (3 to 5 million); and thirdly, forced job placement personnel for certain categories of convicted prisoners and administrative detainees who had completed their original sentence and who were retained to work in the camps, a practice that had been growing in recent years (8 to 10 million). He believed that the reply of the observer for the People's Republic of China referred only to some of those three categories of inmates of labour camps. Furthermore, Mr. Wu's study identified six different categories of labour camp; that might also explain the discrepancy in the number of camps given to the Working Group.

55. His organization regarded it as vitally important that the Sub-Commission and the Working Group on Detention should keep under review the conditions in which detained prisoners were required to work. A line should be drawn

between the legitimate requirement that prisoners might work and the exploitation of prisoners and detainees, as a contemporary form of slave labour. His organization proposed that a review of practices in that area should be included specifically in the agenda of the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery.

56. Mr. SABOIA said that the report of the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery covered a wide range of issues and some of the most serious and massive situations of denial of human rights and exploitation, committed mostly against vulnerable individuals and groups such as women, children and the very poor. While poverty and other economic and social factors constituted the main single cause of practices such as those described in the report, that could by no means be accepted as an excuse for tolerating such grave offences. National action and international cooperation must be pursued with the highest priority.

57. The problems affecting children were perhaps those giving rise to the most serious concern, not only because of their inherent evil but also because they affected human beings in their formative years, leaving permanent scars and probably making them incapable of leading happy and useful lives. Children continued to be the victims of violence and exploitation in both the poor South and the rich North under forms such as child labour, the sale of children, child prostitution, child pornography, and illegal trafficking in children for the purpose of adoption or of illegal transplants.

58. One subject that perhaps should be brought to the attention of the Working Group was the problem of children who were victims of violence or sexual abuse at home, by their own family. Another issue should be the appropriate use of the media in preventing those crimes. He supported the decision of the Working Group to make the use of children for illegal transplants a separate sub-item and to reiterate its call to the Secretary-General for more information.

59. Mr. RI TCHEUL (Observer for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea) noted the continuing existence of slavery in various modern forms and the need for prompt United Nations action to deal with it. Many women and children were being cruelly subjected to slavery in different countries. In particular, girls and young women, because of their poverty, were being forced into prostitution against their will. Since the traffic in women and children, and in prostitution, went beyond national frontiers, an international solution was required.

60. His delegation therefore considered that the proposals and recommendations made by the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery at its seventeenth sessession to be pragmatic and, in particular, that the establishment of an expert committee on slavery and of the procedure adopted under Council resolution 1503 (XLVIII) would make an effective contribution to the elimination of slavery. The Working Group's recommendation on the communication of information regarding the situation of women forced to engage in prostitution during wartime to the Special Rapporteur on the right to

restitution, compensation and rehabilitation for victims of gross violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms would help to draw the international community's attention to another contemporary form of slavery.

61. During the Second World War several hundred thousands of women in the Japanese colonies and Japanese-occupied territories, including over 200,000 in Korea, had been forced to serve as sex slaves for the Japanese Imperial Army. The living conditions of those "comfort women" had been no less harsh than those of slaves in bygone times. Most of the women had died, either for having refused to cooperate or as a result of the psychological and physical suffering caused by having to satisfy the sexual needs of 40 to 50 soldiers a day. Information on "comfort women" was to be found in document E/CN.4/Sub.2/1992/34. Although the events had taken place several decades previously, the ensuing problems still persisted, not only in Korea. The now elderly survivors, whose youth had been trampled upon and who were suffering from all kinds of diseases, wanted such inhuman acts never to occur again on earth. Their bitterness could be assuaged a little only when the Japanese authorities conducted an inquiry into the policy of chauvinistic slavery which it had pursued in the past and presented its sincere excuses. However, there was a lack of political and moral will on the part of the Japanese authorities to do so. Rather than escape its responsibility by uttering a few extremely general words of excuse or by making a purely formal inquiry, the Japanese Government ought to carry out a general inquiry into the real nature of the problem, making public as soon as possible all the documentation relating to "comfort women" at its disposal and hearing the testimony of Japanese who had been involved and of the victims. Otherwise, the concern and mistrust experienced by many countries, particularly in Asia, regarding Japan's efforts to play a political role consistent with its economic power could only increase.

62. Mr. SACHAR said that the sale of children and prostitution were undoubtedly great evils. Yet emphasis was placed on the countries where such practices took place, giving the impression that the Governments concerned were ultimately responsible. The real cause, however, was poverty; for example, there were many cases of girls being taken away on false promises. The phenomenon of "sex tourism" from rich to poor countries should also receive attention.

63. Mr. MOON BONG JOO (Observer for the Republic of Korea), commenting on the issue of the Korean women abducted by the Japanese Imperial Armed Forces during the Second World War, said that since 1991 his Government had urged the Government of Japan to undertake a complete fact-finding operation on the "comfort women" issue, including the role played by the Japanese Government, and then to take appropriate follow-up measures. In compliance with the Korean request, the Japanese Government had officially recognized its involvement in that sad affair at the beginning of July 1992. None the less, it was regrettable that the Japanese Government still maintained that it could not find any evidence that any Korean women involved had been coerced into serving Japanese soldiers. Against that background his Government, for its part, had embarked on its own investigation, including the collection of material and the filing of statements from women victims. An

inter-ministerial ad hoc task force had been set up for that purpose. As a result of the investigation, an interim report revealing that there had been coercion had been published at the end of July 1992; the report had been based on various statistics and on excerpts of testimony by women who had been forced to serve as sex slaves for Japanese soldiers. The Government of the Republic of Korea hoped that the Japanese Government would strengthen its fact-finding efforts and take sincere and appropriate follow-up measures that would demonstrate its true feelings of repentance. It was also hoped that Japanese school textbooks would be corrected so that Japanese students could become more fully aware of that sad event in world history.

PROMOTION, PROTECTION AND RESTORATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AT NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS (agenda item 17) (continued)

(a) PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN: HUMAN RIGHTS AND YOUTH (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1992/36; E/CN.4/Sub.2/1991/42) (continued)

(b) PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND PROTECTION OF WOMEN (continued)

64. Mr. MILOSEVIC (Observer for Yugoslavia) referred to the statement delivered by a representative of a non-governmental organization at the 6th meeting which had contained allegations of the existence of concentration camps in the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. His Government categorically rejected the allegations. Such camps did not exist. The accusations were being made with no proof whatsoever and could only be seen as part of a campaign aimed to thrust all the blame on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

65. For the purpose of establishing the real state of affairs, he wished to remind the Sub-Commission that Yugoslavia had, on several occasions, invited representatives of the United Nations and of the International Committee of the Red Cross to see for themselves, on the spot, the falsity of those accusations. That invitation was extended to them again today.

66. For several days visits had been made to those places in Yugoslavia where the alleged concentration camps were supposed to have been set up. So far no official organ or journalist had confirmed their existence.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.